



CITY OF BIRMINGHAM

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

May 16, 2022

Dear Residents of Birmingham, City Councilors, and Employees:

The City of Birmingham is in a time of unprecedented investment in our community. Our economic outlook is strong and we have already dedicated \$60 million from a budget surplus to invest in our people, neighborhoods and facilities. We are leveraging the more than \$140 million provided by the Biden-Harris administration's American Rescue Plan Act to make an impact in our community. Let's not forget the opportunities that remain from the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and our aggressive efforts to land federal grants to support our neighborhoods. My proposed operating budget combined with these additional funding resources will provide an opportunity for us to invest in our shared priorities, enhance our current efforts and position Birmingham for continued growth.

This \$554 million dollar budget enhances our laser focus commitment on neighborhoods and our youth, builds upon our momentum in public transportation like never before and strengthens our efforts to competitively recruit in the public safety sector. All of this while funding the services the city provides to our residents and businesses.

We strengthen our basic services for the public when we invest in our employees. Since May 2022, this administration, in partnership with the Birmingham City Council, has provided two 5% Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) for all of our employees. With this budget, sworn police and fire personnel will receive a 5%, COLA through an adjusted position grade through the Jefferson County Personnel Board. Taking this additional step for our sworn police and fire personnel will boost their compensation while enhancing our recruitment efforts. The proposed budget would again fund merit and longevity pay for all employees. To address the rising cost of health insurance for our employees, this budget tasks the city with covering the majority of an 8.75% increase. The city will cover 4.75% of this increase in the proposed budget to reduce the impact on many of our employees to as little as 60-cents per paycheck.

Neighborhood revitalization means providing the investments and services that make our residents feel and see improvement. We will extend our street resurfacing commitment with an additional \$15 million. The city's traffic calming efforts will be expanded and weed abatement services increased to maintain city owned property including parks and public rights of way. Combined with additional sidewalk funds, Land Bank support, and demolitions our investment in neighborhood revitalization will be nearly \$19 million in the operating budget. These allocations matched with current funding through the budget surplus will magnify our investment in every community through the city.

We make our neighborhoods stronger when we invest in public transportation. I am proud of the expansion of transit services in the last five years and applaud the Birmingham City Council for being a willing partner in this area. This work continues in the 2024 budget with a proposed \$16.5 million to support the Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority's fixed route service, the Birmingham Xpress bus rapid transit system and the Birmingham On-Demand shared mobility program powered by VIA.

We secure our city's future by the investment we make in our youth. In the 2023 fiscal year, we extended our partnership with Birmingham City Schools to provide mental health services for students in all of our schools. This new budget maintains that commitment as well as support for our high school juniors and seniors through the Birmingham Promise. As we see state level considerations to address financial literacy programs within public schools, I am proud to include a continuation of funding for the BHM Financial Freedom program started last fall in Birmingham City Schools. This program is a first-of-its-kind in financial literacy in the nation. Our commitment to conflict resolution for our youth, safe havens at city-owned recreation centers and juvenile reentry at Jefferson County Family Court will continue.

We realize our potential in public safety when we move to modernize and leverage every tool available. As referenced earlier, this budget proposes a 5% COLA for public safety personnel in police and fire. This COLA combined with two previous 5% COLAs for employees since May 2022 to represent a 15% increase in pay in addition to merit and longevity pay. Coupled with incentive programs provided for police and fire in the current fiscal year, the city has made significant strides to be competitive in recruiting personnel. With recruiting challenges facing cities throughout the nation, we must also look to other strategies. With the valuable partnership of the Birmingham City Council, the city launched a real time crime center in October 2021. This budget proposal looks to expand this modern crimefighting tool. Our neighborhoods have asked for more cameras in our communities and we will provide them in this budget. We will also move to expand the number of non-sworn personnel tracking data within the real time crime center to better inform our officers on the streets.

These are just some of the highlights of the proposed budget. Again, this proposed operating budget leverages the recent budget surplus, ARPA dollars and public-private partnerships the city has established to increase the impact of investments in our city. This unprecedented investment through the operating budget, surplus and ARPA focuses on lifting up each neighborhood to realize the best version of Birmingham we can possibly be.

Please take time to review this document. I encourage each of you to join me in supporting this budget plan for the good of our people.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Woodfin".

Randall L. Woodfin

Mayor